The Penang Bahá'í

A newsletter of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Penang

(For circulation among Bahá'ís only)

Kalimát 166 **Issue 3/166**

In the name of the One True God

Praise be to the all-perceiving, the ever-abiding Lord Who, from a dewdrop out of the ocean of His grace, hath reared the firmament of existence, adorned it with the stars of knowledge, and admitted man into the lofty court of insight and understanding. This dewdrop, which is the Primal Word of God, is at times called the Water of Life, inasmuch as it quickeneth with the waters of knowledge them that have perished in the wilderness of ignorance. Again it is called the Primal Light, a light born of the Sun of divine knowledge, through whose effulgence the first stirrings of existence were made plain and manifest. Such manifestations are an expression of the grace of Him Who is the Peerless, the All-Wise. He it is who knoweth and bestoweth all. He it is who transcendeth all that hath been said or heard. His knowledge will remain forever above the grasp of human vision and understanding and beyond the reach of human words and deeds. To the truth of this utterance existence itself and all that hath appeared therefrom bear eloquent testimony.

It is clear and evident therefore, that the first bestowal of God is the Word and its discoverer and recipient is the power of understanding. This Word is the foremost instructor in the school of existence and the revealer of Him Who is the All-Mighty. All that is seen is visible only through the light of its wisdom. All that is manifest is but a token of its knowledge. All names are but its name and the beginning and end of all matters must needs depend upon it.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Tabernacle of Unity)

Coming Events

FEAST OF KALIMÁT

Date: Sunday, 12th July 2009
Time: 8.00 p.m.
Venue: Bahá'í Centre

The Local Spiritual Assembly invites all Baha'is, young and old, to a combined Feast at the Bahá'í Centre.

"Important aspects of the preparation of the Feast include the proper selection of readings, the assignment, in advance, of good readers, and a sense of decorum both in the presentation and the reception of the devotional programme. . . . "
The Universal House of Justice, 27 August 1989

Youth Gathering

This month's gathering for youth is on **Saturday, 18th July 2009.**
Venue: Einstein's home
Time: 7.30 p.m.
The gathering starts with a pot luck dinner. All youth are invited. For details, please contact Li Wen.

Consolidation Review 2

Date: Sunday, 19th July 2009
Time: 8.00 to 10.00 p.m.
Venue: Bahá'í Centre

For details, please contact CGC members, Salina, Einstein, Layching and Naraine.

Devotional Gatherings

We have two regular Chinese devotional gatherings every Gregorian month. One is held in Sankaran's home in Batu Maung; details for this month's gathering are:
Date: Saturday, 25th July 2009
Time: 8.00 p.m.

The other one moves around and is hosted by different families. The date and venue for July have not been fixed. Watch out for an announcement soon.

The Gelugor sector has fixed its devotional gathering on the first Saturday of each Gregorian month. The venue is the home of Bobby & Lily Seow in Minden Heights.

% % % % % % % % % %

Friends are invited to submit interesting reports of their activities for the newsletter. Photographs are also welcome. To publicize coming events, please send them in in good time, taking into the account that the newsletter is prepared once a Bahá'í month, and is usually ready for dissemination five days before the Nineteen Day Feast. This is to ensure that the forty friends who receive the newsletter by snail mail get it in time before the Feast.

"It is incumbent upon the youth to walk in the footsteps of Hakim and to be trained in his ways, for such important souls as he and his like have now ascended to the Kingdom of Abhá. The youth must grow and develop and take the place of their fathers, that this abundant grace, in the posterity of each one of the loved ones of God who bore great agonies, may day by day increase, until in the end it shall yield its fruit on earth and in Heaven"

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá -

NEWS

Gathering at Kepala Batas

Believers in the north had the rare opportunity of meeting a member of the Universal House of Justice recently.

On 22nd June 2009, at a gathering in Kepala Batas, hundreds of friends gathered to hear Dr. Payman Mohajer. While many friends have met and heard him on a number of occasions earlier (he was one of the Counsellors at our Bahá'í Centre opening so many years ago!) this was the first time he addressed friends as a member of the august Body.

Even though it was a Monday evening, friends came from Bidor, Tapah, Kelantan, Perlis, Alor Setar, Sg Petani, Baling, Pengkalan Hulu, Seberang Perai, Kulim, Taiping, Ipoh, Teluk Intan and of course, Penang. Two Counsellors, Dr. Lee Lee Loh-Ludher and Mr. David Hwang, six members of the National Spiritual Assembly and several Board members were also present.

Devotional started at 7.30 p.m. followed by a brief welcome by the chairman of the Northern Bahá'í Council, Mr. Nagen. The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Mr. Sinnathamby, then gave a glimpse of the hectic past four days , days that saw Dr. Payman hold meetings and consultation with various institutions and youth in the central region. Six youth were then invited to share their experiences and feelings about the "Heroes are They" project. They were among the 740 "heroes" whose names were inscribed on a scroll which was presented to the Universal House of Justice the day before.

Mr. Sinnathamby assured that the project would continue to bring in more youth to serve Bahá'u'lláh. He thanked all agencies who had in various ways contributed to the success of the project.

At 8.35 p.m. the much-awaited session with Dr. Payman Mohajer finally arrived. He opened by saying the youth who were up on the stage earlier and those from the previous day's gathering were touched by the Word of God which would have great influence and effect in their lives - *"weeks, months and years ahead will show itself in their lives".*

"The Universal House of Justice has talked about this 25-year period from 1996 to 2021. . . this period when the focus of the Bahá'í world will be advancing the process of entry by troops.

It was very hard, 13 years ago, to imagine how the process will unfold. Thirteen years thence, we can see the changes , in ourselves and in our community.

In October the Universal House of Justice called for a series of conferences to celebrate the mid-point of the 5 Year Plan, which was also the mid -point of the 25 years. The response of the believers was beyond anyone's expectation! Eighty thousand from every race, speaking every language—so diverse—never before experienced anywhere in the world!

Yet, the unity of thought that united the eighty thousand was amazing to watch. There are not many conferences of 2,000, 3,000 5,000 consulting, sitting in small groups, all unified, speak the same language, seen and experienced the same success. . . .

We are only half way into the period. It is hard to imagine what the next twelve and a half years will bring. . . .

(Continues on page 4)

NEWS

(Continues from page 3)

Thirteen years ago we were struggling to understand what the institute process was. . .

Counsellors and National Assembly members consulted to understand the network of institutes.

Many were asking: why training institutes? We are good Baha'is, we serve; shouldn't it be for new believers, those who don't serve the Faith, don't attend Nineteen Day Feast?

Little did the friends know training institutes were really about empowering us and those near us, to transform—to re-create the earth as Bahá'u'lláh intended.

Look how much capacity has increased today—the network of institutes was trained in every region and every cluster.

Thirteen years ago, even ten, seven years ago, there were hardly any tutors who can teach Ruhí books. Today, tens of thousands can now teach these courses.

Launching Intensive Programmes of Growth (IPGs) was a daunting task less than 8 years ago when they were introduced; even 3 or 4 years ago. Moving from B to A cluster took 3 years, 2 years for many. The first 300 clusters took 5 years, the next 300 took 2 years and the last 400 took only 1 year.

Now it's not years but cycles, and it's not from B to A but from D! We open the area, teach the Faith, introduce core activities. . . . then IPG! Cambodia takes 2 cycles! The capacity that has come to the Bahá'í Community !

At one time, raising pioneers was a challenge; we had to hold a conference, make appeal, etc, etc. . . Today, every one is going pioneering so quickly, like three months in Cambodia. Thousands of friends are spontaneously arising and moving to new clusters. . . .

And we are only half way though! Imagine what's in store for those of us, for you, who continue this path!

We have raised our capacity to carry out acts of service. As friends get into this pattern of life they effectively enter a culture.

Change of culture is more obvious in rural areas. Rural life has simplicity and coherence. Every significant act influences the life of the individual. . . .

In India, friends shared at consultation how the Plan had affected their lives. One person said when he heard of the institute process, the (Assembly) members were the first to go through it. They learnt to consult within the framework of guidance. They now arrived at decisions quickly. Something changed. . . . The villagers noted they themselves have learnt to consult when they finished Book 1.

Another one said he realized from the courses that Bahá'u'lláh gave us laws, including marriage laws. When the first couple married according to Bahá'í laws, they realized how simple it was; no drinking, no breaking family financially, especially for the girl. That changed the culture of the village.

The process has brought a culture of systematic planning to the village. Statistics were displayed on the board.

The process has also brought the culture of accompaniment of friends in service. . . .

Great as our achievements have been, in the coming years we have to think of raising our influence in the life of the wider community.

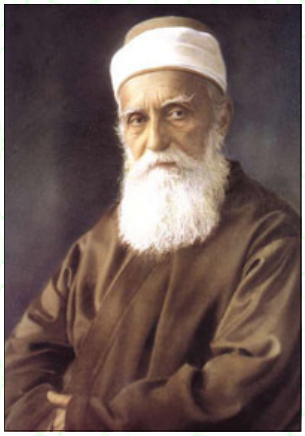
To understand this, it would be helpful to remember 'Abdu'l-Bahá as our Exemplar.

(Continues on page 5)

NEWS

(Continues from page 4)

Very often when we think of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Exemplar, we think of His spiritual qualities—He is upright, wise, caring. . . . But 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not only an Exemplar in spiritual qualities but an Exemplar in action as well. For spiritual qualities have no values if not manifested in action.



'Abdu'l-Bahá's actions were not only confined to Bahá'í service although He was the epitome of Bahá'í service; He welcomed pilgrims, He wrote to Baha'is, etc. . . . He would also go and visit the sick, the poor and the needy. He was very concerned about the society around Him. And that's not all. . . . He will sit with muftis and leaders; He was concerned with nature, development and the progress of society.

Each of us will have to bring at least the three range of activities into our lives:

1. *Service to the Faith—as defined in the 5 Year Plan in the area of expansion and consolidation*
2. *Social action—concern of the welfare of society*
3. *Participating in the discourses of society—nature, challenges and development of society—be able to contribute to these discourses*

In the asli areas this is happening in their village as they carry out the 5 Year Plan. The core activities expand the Faith, raise social consciousness. . . .

In the city, the equivalent of a village is the neighbourhood. Influence neighbours through children's classes and junior youth groups; expansion and consolidation contribute to recreating the nature of the area.

Building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is not for the future, but today. It is through influencing society around you.

Interestingly in Malaysia youth set the pace. The whole community must now rise and emulate the youth.

Faith in the last one year—the asli regions have brought a lot of joy to the Universal House of Justice. It is hoped this wave of activity will soon be a tsunami, not only for the asli but all youth and the whole community."

Dr. Payman Mohajer closed with the assurance that we will be in the prayers of the Universal House of Justice and hoped that each one will be an active participant in the process.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

"Through the potency of the Name of the Best Beloved, invite thou the receptive souls unto God's holy court, that perchance they may not remain deprived of the heavenly Fountain of living water. He is in truth the Gracious, the Forgiving."

Bahá'u'lláh
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp 236-237

NEWS

Teachers' Gathering

(Reported by Nasrin Weik)

"Recently a teachers' gathering was held at the Georgetown Bahá'í Centre. There was a total of eleven attendees and it was refreshing to see so many junior youth and youth arising to serve in this path of service.
The session included the study of the October 20th letter from the Universal House of Justice regarding the significance of the education of children, deepening on the station of a teacher and methods of conducting children's classes. The session was followed by a workshop in which the youth were split into two groups, each conducting a lesson from Book Three.
The youth really did a great job and it was a pleasure to assist them.
The challenge facing our community is to increase the number of resources including children class teachers. Anyone interested in either conducting or assisting a children's class, please contact Nasrin."

Thiru, Shanta, Li Wen, Shireen and Yun Sheen - youth & enthusiasm, ideal qualities for teachers

Blessed is the teacher who remaineth faithful to the Covenant of God, and occupieth himself with the education of children. For him hath the Supreme Pen inscribed that reward which is revealed in the Most Holy Book.

Blessed, blessed is he!

Bahá'u'lláh, Compilation on Bahá'í Education

The Power of Divine Assistance

In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to letters to the National Spiritual Assemblies of India, the British Isles and the United States:

"The vastness of the field, the smallness of your numbers, the indifference of the masses, must neither discourage nor appal you. You should at all times fix your gaze on the promise of Bahá'u'lláh, put your whole trust in His creative Word, recall the past and manifold evidences of His all-encompassing and resistless power, and arise to become worthy and exemplary recipients of His all-sustaining grace and blessings."

"If the friends, individually and collectively, play their part and exert their utmost the abundant blessings of Bahá'u'lláh will be fully vouchsafed, and the triumph of the Plan will mark a glorious chapter in the history of the Faith."

"Delicate and strenuous though the task may be, however arduous and prolonged the effort required, whatsoever the nature of the perils and pitfalls that beset the path of whosoever arises to revive the fortunes of a Faith struggling against the rising forces of materialism, nationalism, secularism, racialism and ecclesiastism, the all-conquering potency of the grace of God, vouchsafed through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, will, undoubtedly, mysteriously and surprisingly, enable whosoever arises to champion His Cause to win complete and total victory. "

HUQUQU'LLAH

For payment of Huqúqu'lláh please contact Mr. Chua Hung Kee 04-890 6472

Calendar of Events

Sun	12 July **Feast of Kalimát** 8 p.m. Bahá'í Centre	19 July **Consolidation Review** 8 to 10 p.m. Bahá'í Centre	26 July
Mon	13 July	20 July	27 July
Tue	14 July	21 July	28 July
Wed	15 July	22 July	29 July
Thu	16 July	23 July	30 July
Fri	17 July	24 July	31 July **Feast of Kamal**
Sat	18 July **Youth Gathering** 7.30 p.m. Einstein's home	25 July **Chinese Devotional** 8 p.m. Sankaran's home	

Whatever is in the heart of man, melody moves and awakens. . . . . 'Abdu'l-Bahá